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ABSTRACT

As our universities and colleges become increasingly multiracial, the attitudes of students of different races toward one another are becoming of primary importance. The purpose of this study is to assess the attitudes of white entering freshmen toward blacks at the University of Maryland. The Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) was administered to 470 white freshmen attending summer orientation. The results clearly indicate that white incoming freshmen have generally negative attitudes toward blacks. Combined with results of earlier studies on upperclassmen at the University, there is a clear negative attitude toward blacks among all whites studied. The implications of these findings for University planning and policymaking are discussed. These include at least one required course in interracial and intercultural relations, seminars and race-related programs sponsored by academic and student affairs offices, as well as money for student and faculty initiated programs and race-related research programs. It is concluded that there is a great deal that can and should be done to minimize the potential for racial friction that exists on campus. (Author/HS)

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SUMMARY

As our universities and colleges become increasingly multiracial, the attitudes of students of different races toward one another are becoming of primary importance. The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of white entering freshmen toward blacks at the University of Maryland. The Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) was administered to 470 white freshmen attending summer orientation. The results clearly indicate that white incoming freshmen have generally negative attitudes toward blacks. Combined with results of earlier studies by Sedlacek and Brooks and others on upperclassmen at the University there is a clear negative attitude toward blacks among all whites studied. The implications of these findings for University planning and policy making are discussed. These include at least one required course in interracial and intercultural relations, seminars and race related programs sponsored by academic and student affairs offices, as well as money for student and faculty initiated programs and race related research programs. There is a great deal that can and should be done to minimize the potential for racial friction which exists on campus.

As our universities and colleges become increasingly multiracial, the attitudes of students of different races toward one another are becoming of primary importance. The large, primarily white universities have increased black freshman enrollment from 3% in 1969 (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970a) to 4% in 1970 (Sedlacek, Brooks and Horowitz, 1971), thus increasing the opportunities for interracial contact among students.

The measurement of racial attitudes has been a difficult task for researchers (Shaw and Wright, 1967; Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970b). A particular problem in assessing the attitudes of whites toward blacks has been the social set or climate for being "tolerant" or "positive" toward blacks. This positive social set has been noted by several researchers (Sigall and Page, 1970; Sedlacek and Brooks, 1971). Evidence that there is a particularly strong positive set among university students was provided by Sedlacek and Brooks (1971). They found that when white students were asked to indicate how most college students felt about people with a number of different values, they indicated that a racist and a bigot were rated most negatively. While this may seem a good indication of racial attitudes one must ask the additional question; Does the strong social set mark their own feelings toward blacks? In developing the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) Sedlacek and Brooks (1970b) attempted to avoid the problem of respondents withdrawing from the measure or masking their feelings. They demonstrated that the insertion of the word "black" into a social or personal situation caused white university students to respond differently and generally more negatively than if race were not mentioned. In fact, data from several studies done on comparable students at the same institution as Sedlacek and Brooks (1970b) subjects show that there is a difference between what white students feel are socially acceptable attitudes toward blacks and how they actually feel themselves (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1971).

Since incoming freshmen are the wave of the future in our universities: what in fact are their racial attitudes? Do they enter with negative attitudes or simply acquire these during their college years? The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of white entering freshmen toward blacks at a large, predominantly white university.

Method

The Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) was developed to measure the attitudes of whites toward blacks (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970b). To provide a racial context and make psychological withdrawal from the measure difficult, 10 personal and social situations relevant to a racial response were created (Table 1). For each situation 10 bipolar semantic differential scales were written (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1957) making a total of 100 items in the SAS (see Table 2). Two forms of the SAS were developed. Each contains the same situations, scales and instructions except the word "black" was inserted into each situation in Form B (see Table 1). The positive pole for each item was varied randomly from right to left to avoid response set.

The SAS was administered to 490 students attending freshman orientation at the University of Maryland, College Park. Questionnaires were distributed randomly so each student had an approximately equal chance to receive either Form A or Form B. Students had no knowledge that different forms existed. Ten questionnaires were completed by blacks and 10 others were not completed and were eliminated from the analysis. The final usable N was 470 (Form A=246, Form B=224). Results were analyzed by comparing Form A and Form B means using a two-tailed t test at the .05 level. Since students were randomly assigned to either form and the forms were identical except for the insertion of the word "black" in Form B, any significant mean differences must be attributed to the word black.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows the results of the t tests between forms. Since 49 of the 100 items showed significant differences between forms there is a strong indication that students responded differently to blacks in the situations. One statistical point which should be made is the chance of making a Type I error with this number of comparisons. According to Sakoda, Cohen and Beall (1954) one would expect only nine tests to be significant at .05 due to chance out of 100 tests made. Thus the differences found in this study are well beyond chance.

The results clearly indicate that white incoming freshmen have generally negative attitudes toward blacks. The only exception seems to be their responses to Situations III (magazine salesman) and VI (policeman). One explanation for this is that these two situations involve service roles and less intimate contact than the others. The concept of whites viewing blacks as appropriately filling such roles in the society is a well documented stereotype. Therefore these situations may simply be reflecting a kind of paternalism or superiority which could be considered very negative. Freshmen felt most negative about Situations I (move next door) and V (friend engaged). Since these two situations involve the most social contact it might be expected they would elicit the most negative feelings. The notion of social distance goes back to the early work of Bogardus (1933) and more recently to that of Posavac & Triandis (1968) among others. Posavac and Triandis found social distance an important variable in race relations. These results closely parallel those of Sedlacek and Brooks (1970b) for matriculated students and a quote from a hypothetical modal student may best illustrate the conclusion of the study. "It's alright to have blacks sell me magazines or be policemen but they had better not move next door or get engaged to any of my friends!"

What are the implications of the results for higher education? It should be apparent that despite the apparent tolerance and change taking place in the

society and on campus, racial prejudice is still prevalent. Of course the data presented here are only from a single university and caution should be exercised in generalizing to all institutions. However despite having 85% state residents, 50% of the Maryland student body has lived in another state or country in the three years prior to entering the University.[1] Thus the student body is more cosmopolitan than one might at first surmise.

Additionally the data here concern attitudes not behaviors. That is, we still do not know what white students may do, if anything, about their feelings. This is an obvious area for further research. However it is unlikely that negative attitudes will not have some effect on the climate of a school. For instance DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks (1972) found that black students who were more realistic about the racism they encountered on campus were more likely to stay in school than blacks unprepared for the racism.

It should be the obligation of every college and university to provide academic and nonacademic programs to combat racism. There are few opportunities for most whites to learn about students from other backgrounds and cultures or of their own prejudices in the American educational system or in the rest of their lives. Thus there is little reason to expect white college and university students to be prepared to effectively relate to students of other races.

In the academic area courses on racism and intercultural relations should be offered and, in the opinion of the writers, required of all students. Seminars, speakers, educational materials, and money for innovative student and faculty initiated programs are but a few ways in which student personnel agencies can help. Research on interracial topics supported by the institution is another concrete step which can be taken by academic and nonacademic administrative units. The extent of racial problems in the future of our campuses can only be estimated but if the data from this study are any indication there is a great deal than can and should be done to minimize the potential for racial friction.

[1] Source: University Student Census, 1968.

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TABLE 1

Instructions and Situations from the Situational Attitude Scale*

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire measures how people think and feel about a number of social and personal incidents and situations. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is anonymous so please DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME.

Each item or situation is followed by 10 descriptive word scales. Your task is to select, for each descriptive scale, the rating which best describes YOUR feelings toward the item.

Sample item: Going out on a date

happy ' A ' B ' C ' D ' E ' sad

You would indicate the direction and extent of your feelings (e.g., you might select B) by indicating your choice (B) on your response sheet by blackening in the appropriate space for that word scale. DO NOT MARK ON THE BOOKLET. PLEASE RESPOND TO ALL WORD SCALES.

Sometimes you may feel as though you had the same item before on the questionnaire. This will not be the case, so DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the questionnaire. MAKE EACH ITEM A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. Respond as honestly as possible without puzzling over individual items. Respond with your first impressions whenever possible.

SITUATIONS

	FORM A	FORM B
I.	A new family moves in next door to you.	A new black family moves in next door to you.
II.	You read in the paper that a man has raped a woman.	You read in the paper that a black man has raped a white woman.
III.	It is evening and a man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.	It is evening and a black man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.
IV.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young men are loitering.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young black men are loitering.
V.	Your best friend has just become engaged.	Your best friend has just become engaged to a black person.
VI.	You are stopped for speeding by a policeman.	You are stopped for speeding by a black policeman.
VII.	A new person joins your social group.	A new black person joins your social group.
VIII.	You see a youngster steal something in a dimestore.	You see a black youngster steal something in a dimestore.
IX.	Some students on campus stage a demonstration.	Some black students on campus stage a demonstration.
X.	You get on a bus and you are the only person who has to stand.	You get on a bus that has all black people aboard and you are the only person who has to stand.

*The Situational Attitude Scale is copyrighted and available from the authors on request (see Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970).

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations and t tests for Forms A and B*

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS** BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM A (N=246) MEAN	S.D.	FORM B (N=224) MEAN	S.D.	t***
	I. NEW FAMILY NEXT DOOR					
1	good-bad	1.23	0.97	1.77	1.00	6.00
2	safe-unsafe	0.89	0.90	1.46	1.17	5.87
3	angry-not angry	2.57	1.65	2.45	1.38	0.87
4	friendly-unfriendly	0.85	0.84	1.22	1.02	4.29
5	sympathetic-not sympathetic	1.97	1.28	1.91	1.17	0.54
6	nervous-calm	2.30	1.39	2.36	1.19	0.47
7	happy-sad	1.12	0.88	1.65	0.97	6.22
8	objectionable-acceptable	2.44	1.43	2.48	1.33	3.69
9	desirable-undesirable	1.28	0.89	1.79	1.13	5.40
10	suspicious-trusting	2.84	1.02	2.46	1.08	3.93
	II. MAN RAPED WOMAN					
11	affection-disgust	3.42	0.95	3.20	1.08	2.42
12	relish-repulsion	2.95	1.28	2.71	1.37	2.00
13	happy-sad	2.89	1.33	3.29	0.98	3.62
14	friendly-hostile	2.53	1.36	2.43	1.34	0.76
15	uninvolved-involved	1.63	1.31	1.56	1.21	0.61
16	hope-hopelessness	2.18	1.17	2.29	1.10	1.09
17	aloof-outraged	1.94	1.35	1.85	1.33	0.71
18	injure-kill	1.27	1.15	1.19	1.13	0.83
19	safe-fearful	2.17	1.12	2.29	1.06	1.27
20	empathetic-can't understand	2.20	1.10	2.42	1.02	2.30
	III. MAN SELLING MAGAZINES					
21	relaxed-startled	1.69	1.21	1.71	1.24	0.16
22	receptive-cautious	3.02	0.93	2.60	1.10	4.43
23	excited-unexcited	2.52	1.12	2.26	1.04	2.56
24	glad-angered	2.67	0.91	2.48	0.93	2.23
25	pleased-annoyed	2.24	1.18	2.09	0.99	1.49
26	indifferent-suspicious	1.97	1.41	1.54	1.38	3.28
27	tolerable-intolerable	2.08	1.11	1.74	1.33	3.00
28	afraid-secure	2.30	1.01	2.24	1.04	0.63
29	friend-enemy	1.78	0.93	1.48	0.89	3.55
30	unprotected-protected	2.50	1.06	2.46	1.14	0.44
	IV. CORNER OF LOITERING MEN					
31	relaxed-tensed	2.80	1.18	3.00	0.99	1.88
32	pleased-angered	1.88	0.92	1.77	0.96	1.27
33	superior-inferior	2.26	1.01	2.28	0.86	0.19
34	smarter-dumber	1.70	0.95	1.79	0.89	1.01
35	whiter-blacker	1.58	0.89	1.20	1.08	4.12
36	aggressive-passive	2.56	1.04	2.52	1.13	0.38
37	safe-unsafe	2.21	1.25	2.27	1.21	0.53
38	friendly-unfriendly	2.12	1.09	1.90	1.13	2.16
39	excited-unexcited	2.02	1.09	1.73	1.05	2.91
40	trivial-important	1.79	1.09	1.86	1.11	0.68

*Scale A to E (Numerical equivalent, 0 to 4)
**See Table 1 for complete situation.
***All t values larger than 1.97 are significant beyond .05 (2-tailed test).

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations and t tests for Forms A and B*
(Continued)

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS** BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM A (N=246) MEAN	S.D.	FORM B (N=224) MEAN	S.D.	t***
	V. FRIEND BECOMES ENGAGED					
41	aggressive-passive	1.43	1.13	1.98	1.13	5.27
42	happy-sad	0.69	0.90	1.74	1.31	10.25
43	tolerable-intolerable	1.49	1.61	1.82	1.45	2.30
44	complimented-insulted	0.90	0.87	1.63	1.01	8.47
45	angered-overjoyed	2.73	1.16	2.01	1.08	6.94
46	secure-fearful	1.73	1.42	1.79	1.20	0.52
47	hopeful-hopeless	0.84	0.87	1.57	1.19	7.64
48	excited-unexcited	1.52	1.46	1.94	1.27	3.29
49	right-wrong	1.04	0.95	1.76	1.28	6.90
50	disgusting-pleasing	3.23	0.93	2.24	1.16	10.28
	VI. STOPPED BY POLICEMAN					
51	calm-nervous	3.22	1.05	2.94	1.39	2.53
52	trusting-suspicious	2.40	1.32	1.74	1.55	4.99
53	afraid-safe	2.09	1.49	2.92	1.36	6.28
54	friendly-unfriendly	1.88	1.30	1.61	1.43	2.18
55	tolerant-intolerant	1.24	1.21	0.99	1.14	2.37
56	bitter-pleasant	2.29	1.07	2.59	1.16	2.97
57	cooperative-uncooperative	1.06	1.27	1.07	1.32	0.09
58	acceptive-belligerent	1.09	1.06	0.88	1.04	2.12
59	inferior-superior	1.80	1.04	1.97	0.83	1.97
60	smarter-dumber	2.06	0.93	2.19	0.87	1.56
	VII. PERSON JOINS SOCIAL GROUP					
61	warm-cold	1.29	1.08	1.23	1.09	0.56
62	sad-happy	2.90	0.94	2.67	1.01	2.63
63	superior-inferior	2.19	1.03	2.17	0.68	0.21
64	threatened-neutral	2.85	1.01	3.05	0.99	2.10
65	pleased-displeased	1.55	1.08	1.60	1.04	0.55
66	understanding-indifferent	1.37	1.19	1.31	1.30	0.46
67	suspicious-trusting	2.31	1.13	2.43	1.26	1.06
68	disappointed-elated	2.41	0.89	2.27	0.84	1.75
69	favorable-unfavorable	1.33	0.95	1.27	0.94	0.75
70	uncomfortable-comfortable	2.67	1.08	2.67	1.07	0.03
	VIII. YOUNGSTER STEALS					
71	surprising-not surprising	2.73	1.37	2.79	1.16	0.53
72	sad-happy	1.30	1.01	1.23	1.10	0.75
73	disinterested-interested	2.43	1.17	2.42	1.06	0.07
74	close-distant	1.81	1.08	1.93	1.10	1.24
75	understandable-baffling	1.68	1.01	1.43	1.09	2.57
76	responsible-not responsible	2.28	1.27	2.36	1.15	0.71
77	concerned-unconcerned	1.63	1.28	1.65	1.34	0.18
78	sympathy-indifference	1.80	1.14	1.71	1.20	0.84
79	expected-unexpected	1.94	1.14	1.78	0.99	1.59
80	hopeful-hopeless	1.55	1.07	1.79	1.08	2.46

*Scale A to E (Numerical equivalent, 0 to 4)
**See Table 1 for complete situation.
***All t values larger than 1.97 are significant beyond .05 (2-tailed test).

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations and t tests for Forms A and B*
(Continued)

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS** BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM A (N=246) MEAN	S.D.	FORM B (N=224) MEAN	S.D.	t***
	IX. CAMPUS DEMONSTRATION					
81	bad-good	1.97	1.04	1.86	1.14	1.19
82	understanding-indifferent	1.52	1.06	1.48	1.10	0.39
83	suspicious-trusting	1.69	0.92	1.80	0.94	1.36
84	safe-unsafe	2.02	1.05	2.18	1.07	1.71
85	disturbed-undisturbed	1.70	1.18	1.48	1.13	2.06
86	justified-unjustified	1.80	0.84	1.61	1.00	2.25
87	tense-calm	1.84	1.11	1.58	1.00	2.65
88	hate-love	2.08	0.62	2.01	0.76	1.06
89	wrong-right	2.03	0.92	2.00	1.07	0.31
90	humorous-serious	2.83	1.08	3.29	0.83	5.05
	X. ONLY PERSON STANDING					
91	fearful-secure	2.44	1.16	1.89	1.17	5.10
92	tolerable-intolerable	1.00	1.11	1.18	1.03	1.88
93	hostile-indifferent	2.89	1.08	2.82	0.96	0.72
94	important-trivial	3.08	1.02	2.70	1.09	3.91
95	conspicuous-inconspicuous	1.53	1.29	1.15	1.16	3.39
96	calm-anxious	1.56	1.32	2.05	1.22	4.18
97	indignant-understanding	2.80	1.08	2.60	0.95	2.11
98	comfortable-uncomfortable	2.44	1.30	2.65	1.17	1.89
99	hate-love	2.07	0.69	2.18	0.59	1.92
100	not resentful-resentful	1.08	1.14	1.04	0.97	0.42

*Scale A to E (Numerical equivalent, 0 to 4)
**See Table 1 for complete situation.
***All t values larger than 1.97 are significant beyond .05 (2-tailed test).